

to chop grass that I feed to my 40 beef cows every day. I don't have any pasture so I rely on cutting roadside ditches for feed. This tractor uses only 1 1/2 gal. of gas per day to chop a load of feed. It's lightweight, yet has enough power to do the job."

**Ronald Dove, Century, Fla.:** "My **Cub Cadet** LT1050 riding mower worked great until the engine blew up in its fifth year. It wasn't due to lack of oil or maintenance. On the plus side, when this machine worked it had a smooth ride and did a uniform job of cutting grass."

**Paul Peyton, Ava, Mo.:** "I own several **Ryobi** tools including a table saw, 3 cordless drills, a cordless zip saw, and a cordless circular saw, and they're all best buys. In the past I also owned a Ryobi router and a bench top wood lathe and they worked great, too."

"The 1990 **Mazda** B-2600 4-WD pickup I bought used 2 years ago is a best buy. I've repaired some wiring and installed a new battery. Otherwise, this pickup has performed flawlessly. If I could find a newer, nicer Mazda pickup with a manual transmission and a small engine, I'd buy it in a heartbeat."

"Our **Englander** wood stove is our sole source of heat ([www.englishwoodstovestore.com](http://www.englishwoodstovestore.com); ph 865 982-8194). At \$800 it cost only about a third as much as other certified wood stoves I checked out. Last winter we had a lot of record low temperatures, but we still used only 2 1/3 cords of wood. This stove has met our expectations in every way."

"When we learned that our local power company wouldn't serve our property, we had to look at alternatives. After dismissing a number of charlatans and scams, we discovered **Backwoods Solar** ([www.backwoodssolar.com](http://www.backwoodssolar.com); ph 208 265-4788). They answered my many questions and

**"When we learned that our local power company wouldn't serve our property, we had to look at alternatives."**

helped establish design parameters for a solar system that would fill our needs.

"I installed the system myself with frequent telephone advice from the company. It has been our only source of electricity for 2 years and has performed flawlessly with no failures, while our grid-served neighbors have suffered through numerous power outages. It provides the electricity to run our 240-volt deep well pump, full-size refrigerator, microwave, crockpot, and all our shop tools including a bandsaw, drill press, 2 hp table saw, 2 hp miter saw, air compressor, and shop vacuum. It also provides the electricity for all our power hand tools."

"The company only recommended the components we needed for the system and made no effort to oversell anything. It seems the field of solar power is well-populated with fraud and deception. Ethical providers such as this company are needed and welcome."

"I like our **Magnum Energy** 4448PAE inverter ([www.magnumenergy.com](http://www.magnumenergy.com); ph 425 353-8833). In a solar electric system, the inverter converts DC power from batteries to AC power that's common to most normal tools and appliances. The Magnum produces a true sine wave power that's essential to properly run computers, TVs and other electronics. It also produces the 240-volt power we need to run our deep well pump. Other inverters require 'stacking', which requires 2 inverters and a pricey device to coordinate their outputs into 240 volts."

"This inverter also acts as a battery charger."

When we start our generator on cloudy days, it automatically switches to provide power to the house while simultaneously charging the batteries. The inverter has run continuously for 2 years, often at maximum output, without one minute of downtime."

**Elvin L. Smith, Clarissa, Minn.:** Elvin nominates his 1972 **IH** 656 diesel tractor equipped with gear drive as his "best buy ever". "The clutch on the torque amplifier has been replaced twice. The tachometer quit working at about 14,100 hrs., and the replacement tachometer now has about 2,320 hrs. on it. I replaced the head gasket 2 years ago. The fuel injector pump has been tuned up, some bearings in the transmission were replaced, and the gear shifter was rebuilt."

**Jonas Mast, North Bloomfield, Ohio:** "The **Deere** LT133 riding mower I bought used 10 years ago, equipped with a 42-in. deck, is my best buy. It's powered by a Kohler 12 hp engine that still doesn't use any oil."

**Larry L. Martz, Valley, Neb.:** "I bought my **Ferguson** TO30 tractor about 30 years ago and used it to mow my 4 acres and to do work for my neighbors. Later on I mounted a blade on the tractor and now use my 1 1/2-year-old **Massey Ferguson** 35 to do the mowing. It seems Ferguson tractors just never wear out, and very seldom do they need repairs."

**Carl V. Southard, Casey, Ill.:** "I'm 89 years old and stand by **Troy Bilt**, **Sears Craftsman**, **Stihl**, and **Toyota** products. They're built to last."

**Russell J. Williams, Pettibone, N. Dak.:** "My 2013 **Deere** 255 zero turn riding mower works fast and has reduced my mowing time from 15 hrs. to 5 hrs."

**Zach Gunnink, Lafayette, Minn.:** Zach's impressed with the 2014 **TM Pro Series** 30-in. log splitter he mounted on his skid loader (ph 320 286-3077; [www.skidsplitter.com](http://www.skidsplitter.com)). "It makes splitting wood an easy job and can handle almost anything. I highly recommend it."

**Jerry Dunn, Wickliffe, Ky.:** "My 2012 **Ford** F-150 2-WD Club Cab pickup equipped with a V-8 engine rides better and is quieter than any other pickup I've owned."

**Ronald Shook, Spencerville, Ohio:** "Our 2 MTD riding mowers work great, but a rear tire on one of them kept going flat. I was going to have a tube put in it, but getting the wheel off was a real bear. I had to use a gear puller and heat the wheel hub red hot 4 or 5 times just to get it off. Apparently this company hasn't heard of never-seize compound."

**Douglas P. Strouse, Mason, Mich.:** "No problems with my 2009 **Husqvarna** 460 Rancher chainsaw equipped with an X-Torq® engine. I always take 2 saws to the woods so I bought 2 of these. They're dependable and easy to clean. I just set the choke and after 3 pulls they're running. These are good simple saws, and replacing the chain is an easy job."

On the "worst buy" side, he lists his **Global Hydronics** wood burning stove. "Three cracks causing leaks have developed in the stove. There are still 5 years left on the warranty but the company won't honor it. They did pay the welding shop for repairing the first 2 cracks, but I had to pay for the third one."

**David J. Weidner, Chambersburg, Penn.:** A **Hamilton Beach** battery-operated automatic jar opener rates as David's "best buy". "I've spent almost 50 years trying to get jar lids off, so I was glad to find this unit. I can set it on any size jar lid and when I push the button, the heavy duty plastic jaws close, twist and 'pop' the lid off."

**Norbert J. Fisher, River Falls, Wis.:** "My 1993 **Chevrolet** S-10 pickup always starts and gets more than 20 mpg. It has required



**Don Viste uses nose pumps to draw water out of nearby ponds. "Cattle seem to do better on them because the water is clean and fresh," he says.**

## Rancher Likes His "Best Buy" Nose Pumps

"We bought our first nose pump after we lost 29 head of cattle that fell through the ice on a dugout pond going for water," says Don Viste, a rancher 120 miles north of Calgary, Alberta.

Nose pumps have a small water basin with a lever connected to a pumping cylinder. When a cow wants to drink, it pushes the lever with its nose, drawing water out of a nearby pond or reservoir. When the lever is released, there's no water left in the pipe or basin to freeze.

"It keeps dugouts cleaner because cows aren't wading into them. Cattle seem to do better on them because the water is clean and fresh. We have 10 dugouts set up for nose pumps but we only need 3 working at a time so we move them around when we move the

cows," says Viste.

When weather gets down to 30 to 40 below, Viste checks the pumps once a day because the levers can freeze. "I take a hammer and knock the ice off them. I probably should just set up a windbreak around them. But it's not a big deal because one tap frees them up. It only happens in extreme cold."

Viste notes that it can take a little while for cows to get the hang of the levers. Calves learn quickly by copying their mothers. There is some investment to setting them up (\$350 to \$400 apiece; [www.riferam.com](http://www.riferam.com); ph 570 740-1100) but he says it's a lot better than chopping through the ice on a pond every day. He also uses them during the summer.

only routine maintenance and has never needed a wheel alignment. I recently bought state collector license plates for it."

**Wayne Boese, Nelson, Wis.:** "I have several acres of grass to cut, and this machine has reduced my mowing time by half," says Wayne about his 2013 **Cub Cadet** Z-Force zero turn riding mower. "It has steering wheel control instead of individual levers, which I really like."

**Matt Borlen, Bend, Oregon:** "I like my **Cat Challenger** MT 525B and MT 565B tractors. Both are equipped with CVT transmissions, which are awesome. The transmissions let you match engine rpm's and ground speed perfectly for the desired work, which saves fuel. These tractors have many features that make driving them a pleasure."

"I own a **Bobcat** 2200 utility vehicle equipped with a Honda engine and am always fighting dead batteries. I've had to replace the battery a couple of times. Also, this vehicle is hard to keep running as it tends to die all the time when returning to idle. It's the only Honda engine I've ever had a problem with."

**Dave Batker, Brooklyn, Wis.:** "I like my 2007 **Kubota** RTV 900 utility vehicle, which I bought used with low hours. It replaced a Land Pride Treker, which my wife and I used for several years. However, we're both in our upper 70's and the steering on the Treker became very difficult for us. The Kubota has power steering and hydrostatic drive, and it has become our 'dream machine'. We look for any excuse to drive it."

**Terry Ross, Franktown, Colo.:** "After 2 acquaintances had fatal horse accidents, I signed up for the 3-week **Minnesota Horse Training Academy** that I read about in **FARM SHOW** ([www.mnhorsetrainingacademy.com](http://www.mnhorsetrainingacademy.com); ph 320 272-4199). It's the best training course I've ever had. Instructor Larry Surret's techniques really work. My horses are much safer to ride now."

**Gary Alford, Edwardsburg, Mich.:** "I installed a **Pertronix** electronic ignition in my old Ford 800 tractor, which had a worn

distributor shaft ([www.pertronix.com](http://www.pertronix.com); ph 909 599-5955). Since then the tractor has never run better."

"**Seal Lube** seal expander is supposed to seal rubber rings and gaskets, but I haven't had a lot of luck with it. I tried it on my Deere 2150 tractor which had leaking hydraulics, and on a Toyota pickup with a leaking rear main seal."

**Tim Yoder, Vanleer, Tenn.:** "I wouldn't be without my 2009 **Dura-Grader** 3-pt. hitch ([www.Dura-Grader.com](http://www.Dura-Grader.com); ph 228 255-1185). Works great for spreading fresh gravel and leveling worn driveways, especially if there's some moisture in the ground. It brings up old gravel to fill potholes and after several passes leaves a level surface."

**Thomas Marinovich, Boonton, N.J.:** "My **Honda** 3011 riding mower cuts clean and has a powerful vacuum that removes thatch."

**Nick Petragnani, Cheyney, Penn.:** "We bought a **Do-All** battery-powered, automatic clay target thrower in 2007 that came with a one-year warranty ([www.doalldoors.com](http://www.doalldoors.com); ph 800 252-9247). The main gear on the unit split in 2013 so we asked the company for a replacement gear. Instead, they shipped us a complete new target thrower with no questions asked. That's exceptional service. I highly recommend this company."

**Neil Noble, Melancton, Ontario:** "I'm not happy with the 5.4-liter engine on my 2004 **Ford** F-150 pickup. I've owned 8 different pickups since I was a teenager, but the engine on this Ford is the worst. We searched for a replacement engine and finally found one that we bought for almost \$9,000. But the new engine also has a serious knock, and the company refuses to help."

**Robert Vchulek, Milton, Fla.:** "My 2005 **Dodge** pickup has more than 53,000 miles on it but still has the original battery. It always starts right up, even after it sits for several months at a time. I've never had a battery last as long."

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